

**Amendments to the Drawings:**

The attached sheet of drawings includes new FIG. 3 depicting a slide bearing or bearing for reducing friction in accordance with the invention.

Attachment: One (1) new sheet of drawings

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The claims are 1-5. Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the bearing is for reducing friction as requested by the Examiner, and the remaining claims 2-5 have been amended to improve their form. A new sheet depicting FIG. 3 schematically showing the bearing for reducing friction or slide bearing as recited in claim 1, as amended, has been added, and the specification has been amended to refer to the new FIG. 3. Reconsideration is expressly requested.

The drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) as failing to show the "bearing surfaces/coatings" recited in the claims. In response, Applicants submit herewith a new FIG. 3, showing the slide bearing or bearing for reducing friction recited in claim 1 as amended, having a metallic support shell 1, on which a slide layer 2 made of a bearing metal is applied and which slide layer 2 carries a cover layer 3, which serves as a running layer and whose thickness corresponds at most to the wear of the cover layer that can be expected during the average useful lifetime of the slide layer 2. The specification has been amended to refer to FIG. 3 and the items shown therein. It is respectfully submitted that the foregoing amendments overcome the

Examiner's objections under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a), and Applicants respectfully request that the objections on this basis be withdrawn.

Claims 1-5 were objected to as reciting "a friction bearing" without defining if the friction bearing imparts or reduces friction. In response, Applicants have amended claim 1 to clarify that the bearing is for reducing friction, that is, a slide bearing, as requested by the Examiner.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) (and under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) upon perfecting priority) as being anticipated by *U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0180572* to *Norito et al.* Claims 4 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Norito et al.* and further in view of *U.S. Patent No. 4,847,135* to *Braus*.

With respect to the Examiner's comment regarding perfecting priority, Applicants respectfully request clarification as the Examiner has already indicated that certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau.

With respect to the Examiner's rejection, essentially the Examiner's position was that *Norito et al.* discloses the friction bearing recited in the rejected claims except for the cover layer being covered by a sliding lacquer on the basis of graphite or molybdenum sulfide, which was said to be disclosed in *Braus et al.*. In the Examiner's view, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify *Norito et al.* and provide a layer on the cover layer which is a sliding lacquer on the basis of graphite or molybdenum sulfide, as taught by *Braus et al.*, for the purpose of improving the friction and sliding properties of the bearing.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As set forth in claim 1 as amended, Applicants' invention provides a bearing for reducing friction with a support shell and a slide layer made of a bearing metal which is applied to the support shell. The slide layer carries a cover layer forming a running layer whose thickness corresponds at most to the wear and tear of the cover layer expected during the average service life of the slide layer. In this way Applicants' invention provides a bearing which permits recognition of when a change in a bearing is necessary from the bearing itself.

Slide bearings are known that have a support shell, a slide layer made of a bearing metal, and a cover layer that covers the bearing metal, which cover layer forms a running layer, in which an optical difference exists between the bearing metal layer and the running layer, due to the different alloys; however, it is respectfully submitted that the state of the art such as that which is evident from the primary reference to Norito et al. cannot render obvious Applicants' bearing for reducing friction as recited in claim 1, as amended, in which the matter of concern is to obtain information concerning the useful lifetime of the slide layer in order to be able to ensure timely bearing replacement.

In the case of conventional slide bearings having a three-layer structure, the thickness of the uppermost running layer is selected with regard to the running properties to be guaranteed by way of this running layer, whereby it is presumed that a running layer is present during the entire useful lifetime of the slide bearing in order to guarantee the tribological properties of the bearing during its use. For this reason, the thickness of the running layer is greater than the wear that is expected during use of the bearing, which wear, after all, limits the

useful lifetime in the case of a predetermined maximal bearing play.

With Applicants' bearing for reducing friction as recited in claim 1 as amended, a corresponding running layer during the end of the useful lifetime of the slide bearing is intentionally eliminated, because it turned out that after the run-in period, the ability of the slide bearing to withstand stress depends on the properties of the slide layer that accommodates the running layer, and therefore the useful lifetime of the bearing depends on the useful lifetime of this slide layer. If the thickness of the cover layer is therefore selected in such a manner that the time of use of the bearing up to wearing away of the cover layer corresponds to the required useful lifetime of the slide layer, a conclusion can be drawn concerning the remaining useful lifetime of the slide layer, and thus of the slide bearing, on the basis of the residual thickness of the cover layer, in each instance.

There is no disclosure or suggestion in *Norito et al.* that the thickness of the running layer 4 was selected in such a manner that the time span until complete wearing away of this running layer 4 is supposed to correspond to the useful lifetime of the slide layer 2b. In *Norito et al.*, the thickness of the

running layer 4 is indicated as being 10 to 20  $\mu\text{m}$ , for example. See paragraph [0021]. The measured wear amounts to not more than 6  $\mu\text{m}$ . See paragraph [0039]. It is respectfully submitted that the disclosure of *Norito et al.* as set forth above conclusively shows that *Norito et al.* can neither anticipate nor render obvious Applicants' bearing for reducing friction as recited in claim 1, as amended, because the thickness of the running layer 4 in *Norito et al.* is significantly greater than the wear that is expected.

The remaining reference to *Braus et al.* has been considered but is believed to be no more pertinent. Like *Norito et al.*, there is no disclosure or suggestion of a bearing for reducing friction having a running layer whose thickness corresponds at most to the wear and tear of the cover layer expected during the average service life of the slide layer.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 as amended, together with claims 2-5, which depend directly or indirectly thereon, are patentable over the cited references.

In summary, claims 1-5 have been amended, along with the specification, and new FIG. 3 has been added. In view of the

foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the claims be allowed and that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Enclosures: Appendix - 1 new sheet of drawings

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on April 3, 2009.

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# APPENDIX